



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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**FIVE INDICTED FOR ALLEGED PARTICIPATION
IN INTERSTATE STOLEN CAR RING**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced the unsealing of an indictment charging five individuals with conspiracy to transport and to sell motor vehicles which had been stolen and then traveled in interstate commerce. The five individuals charged are Camil Assaf, a 51-year old resident of Tampa, Florida, Mohamed Al Jallad, a 45-year old Syrian national who formerly resided in Polk County, Florida, but whose present whereabouts are unknown; Nizam Darwish, age 58, and two unidentified individuals who have been charged as John Doe #1 and John Doe #2. The indictment also charges each defendant with seven counts of transporting stolen vehicles in interstate commerce and seven counts of selling a stolen vehicle which had been transported in interstate commerce. The maximum penalty for the conspiracy count is five years' imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. The maximum penalty for each of the other counts is ten years' imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

The indictment alleges that the defendants traveled to several states, including Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Michigan, using assumed false names. In each state, they responded to newspaper advertisements placed by private individuals who were seeking to sell their late model used cars. The indictment further alleges that the defendants "purchased" the vehicles using counterfeit bank checks which were worthless. After obtaining possession of the vehicles, the defendants transported the vehicles to Tampa, where they were sold to innocent buyers. The allegedly stolen vehicles included a Chevrolet Suburban, a Ford Explorer, a BMW, a Mazda 626 LX, a Chevrolet Tahoe, a Ford F250, and a Lincoln Towncar.

The case was investigated by the Tampa Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Dennis I. Moore

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.